



NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

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May 17, 2007

Mr. Eric Newman
6450 Cecil Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63105

Re: Accession #1994.8

Dear Mr. Newman:

Thank you for your telephone call of this date re the engraved copper plates made for the Province of New Hampshire by the Boston engraver Thomas Johnston. I hope that the enclosed information will be of use to you in your new edition of *Colonial American Paper Money*, and I am,

Sincerely yours,

Russell Bastedo
State Curator





NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

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**NOTES ON THE ENGRAVED COPPER PLATES
FOR BILLS OF CREDIT
ACQUIRED AT AUCTION BY THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
ON OCTOBER 7, 1994**

These plates were used to print bills of credit in order to raise funds for various public needs of the Province of New Hampshire.

These are two out of a set of three such plates that were engraved in 1742. The third plate was used for printing the reverse sides of the bills of the largest denominations (7/6, 10s, 20s, and 40s), and it is also said to survive.

These plates represent an issue of bills of credit that can be said to be the most important both historically and aesthetically of all the issues ever made by the Province of New Hampshire.

These plates were used for three major emissions of bills: those authorized by an act of April 3, 1742; those authorized by an act of September 28, 1743; and those authorized by an act of February 16, 1744/5. The same plates were used for all three emissions, but the dates "1743" and "1744" were added by an engraver to the plates as new bills were issued under succeeding acts.

The first emission, authorized by the act of 1742, was the famous £25,000 issue by which the Province of New Hampshire, just separated from the Province of Massachusetts and given a new governor in the person of Benning Wentworth, provided itself with funds to put its new government into operation and to undertake important public works. In addition to providing funds for the governor's salary, the £25,000 issue was intended to provide a medium for purchasing foreign manufactured goods, to build a state house, to build a prison, to build a lighthouse at Portsmouth Harbor, to repair Fort William and Mary at New Castle, to build a fort at Lake Winnepesaukee, and to build roads into the interior of the province.

The third emission, printed from the same plates with the addition of the date "1744," was issued to finance the expedition against the French fortress of Louisbourg at Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The authorizing legislation provided for an emission of £13,000; later, additional emissions of £6,000, £8,000, and £60,000 were struck from the same plates. The reduction of the fortress of Louisbourg, carried out jointly by the governments of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, was the single greatest military triumph accomplished by provincial troops in British North America against the French enemy.

Thus, these engraved plates provided the currency necessary to begin and maintain the government of a newly-separated Province of New Hampshire and to finance the greatest military victory of the province in the protracted wars with the French.

Aesthetically, these plates are the most attractive examples of engraved currency ever issued by the Province of New Hampshire, and are equal in excellence of design and in skill of engraving to the best bills of credit issued at about the same period by the richer provinces of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The bills struck from these plates make use of architectural and stylistic features associated with baroque design, thus attaining both beauty of design and an intricacy that was intended to foil counterfeiters. Some of the bills are bordered by vegetative scrolls and festoons; others have architectural enframements. Each has an elaborately-engraved Royal coat-of-arms in its lower left-hand corner. Most are topped with crowns, scallop shells, or tree designs that add to their complexity and to the difficulty of copying them. The wording on the bills varies from Roman to italic to cursive script to Old English, further adding to the attractiveness and visual complexity of the issue.

The Price of Freedom: New Hampshire's Eighteenth century Engraver's Plates

by Russell Bastedo, State Curator

During Summer 1994 the State of New Hampshire received word from Phillips Auction Galleries, London, that two copper engraver's plates used to print New Hampshire colonial currency were to be sold at auction, October 7, 1994.

Research indicated that the plates were two of three known to have been made in 1741/2 by Thomas Johnston, a renowned Boston engraver. Johnston was active in Boston 1708 - 1767, combining a number of careers in order to make a living in the small town (Boston had a population of 16,382 by actual census in 1742). In addition to being an engraver of maps, bookplates and tradecards, Johnston was a decorative painter for furniture and signs; a publisher of singing-books and a church singer; an organ builder; and a painter of heraldic devices. 1

Johnston's engraved works are highly prized by collectors because of the skillful use of Baroque design elements. Collectors of engraved works and examples of early American colonial design and printing might therefore be among the bidders.

A second group of bidders might be expected to include collectors of currency and paper money. Johnston had produced three currency engraver's plates for New Hampshire. The whereabouts of any of these plates had been unknown until two of the three arrived at Phillips Auction Galleries. [The third engraver's plate is still privately owned.] The consignor's identity remains unknown, despite the best efforts of more than a few collectors to learn his or her identity.

In addition to the interest aroused by an anonymous consignor, a third group of bidders might be expected to respond to the story behind the engraver's plates and how and why they were made. Here is the story behind Thomas Johnston's work for New Hampshire, now more than two hundred fifty years old.

When William and Mary became joint sovereign of Britain in 1688, British North America had a patchwork of colonial governments, based on the individual beginnings of the colonies. Sometimes a petitioner or group of petitioners had paid the English monarch for a land grant or patent to lands in the New World. Sometimes the monarch had asked for a share of the profits if he or she gave permission to settle in British North America: in Maryland, for example, Charles I had asked for twenty per cent of any gold or silver found by Lord Calvert. And there were still other scenarios for settlement, giving each British North American colony a development different from any other.

Following the English defeat of the Dutch in a series of naval wars fought (with pauses for restocking) between 1652 - 1677, England's only major European opponent was France. The two superpowers were now to battle for control of the world each knew, and for whether that world would be protestant or catholic, for more than one hundred twenty-five years. At the end of the struggle, which lasted from 1688 until Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, France was exhausted and England stood triumphant. The spread of catholicism had been stopped; France itself was without a state religion as part of the peace settlement with England.

William and Mary knew in 1688 that they were soon to go to war with France and her allies, and that North America would be one of the stages on which the global war would be fought. In order to prepare, the British North American colonies would have to have a standardized form of government. The system installed by the joint monarchs - a Royally appointed governor working with an assembly of locally prominent landholders in each colony, and with all proposed colonial laws passed on by the British Board of Trade and the Exchequer (Treasury) - held until the American Revolution.

The opening campaign in the global war with France was the War of the Grand Alliance

(1688 - 1697). France had seen an opportunity to invade the German Palatinate; England and other European protestant states rallied to right the balance of power between catholic and protestant states. The protestant alliance defeated the French in a famed naval battle at La Hogue.

The North American phase of the European war was called King William's War. During it the French and their Native American allies attacked the British colonial subjects and their Native American allies. Fearing the demands of global war on her military forces, Britain had asked her North American colonies to raise and equip their own troops, promising to repay bills submitted. Massachusetts knew she would be first in the line of French fire, and the colonial government asked for permission to print her own paper money, to pay for troops raised and equipped. The paper money would be retired as British repayments for bills submitted were received.

The 1690 printing of paper money in Massachusetts was the first time Britain had tried such a currency. There had been earlier experiments with paper money - in Stockholm (1661) and in French Canada (1685 and after); these issuings of paper money had been issued not as circulating currencies, but as bills of credit to pay for specific programs. This was what Massachusetts was proposing; the big question for England was, would such an issuing of paper money in British North America be accepted as payment? A number of skeptics said it would not be; Adam Smith carefully described the experiment in his important book An Inquiry Into The Wealth Of Nations (1776).

Massachusetts succeeded with its issuing of paper money. South Carolina asked for permission to print paper money in 1702, as a way to pay for raising troops during Phase Two of the global war between Britain and France (in The War of Spanish Succession, a.k.a. Queen Anne's War, 1702 - 1713). In 1709 New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut and New York followed South Carolina and Massachusetts precedents. Rhode Island asked for per-

mission to print paper money in 1710, and received permission; North Carolina followed suit in 1712. It must be reiterated that these issuings of paper money were not issued as circulating currencies, but as bills of credit to pay for specific projects. Their acceptance as payment in British North America allowed colonies to gear up for their battles against French Canada and her Native American allies.

King William's War with the French had ended in 1697. Phase Two of the global struggle with France was fought between 1702 - 1713, for the right to control the fading Spanish empire. The Spanish ruler was dying and there was no clear successor; but Spain was under French protection and the French supported the Duke of Anjou as the next Spanish ruler. England and her protestant allies refused to accept the pro-French Duke of Anjou, and war was the result. The war ended indecisively; the Peace of Utrecht (1714) transferred the Spanish Netherlands, Milan, Naples and Sardinia to the protestant alliance, but the pro-French Duke of Anjou was named Philip V of Spain, and Spain remained a French ally.

Between 1713 - 1739 there was a breathing space, as Europe's catholic and protestant forces regrouped and rearmed. British North America was also at peace during these years, and the British North American colonies were able to develop their coastal trade, and to get into smuggling in the Caribbean, as a way to find world markets for their exports in defiance of the British Acts of Navigation, which had controlled their shipping since 1650. During the 1713 - 1739 years the British North American colonies were able to grow without much oversight; but in 1739 France declared she would monopolize trade with the fading Spanish Empire's territories, angering English commercial interests. Parliament wanted war, and the pro-war interests produced an English seaman, Jenkins, who for years had been begging in London. Jenkins carried one of his ears with him in a small box, and he told potential donors that the ear had been looped off by Spanish forces wanting to send a warning to England to leave Spain alone. Jenkins' story had never met

with much interest; his story had been dismissed as that of a pirate who had got what he deserved. But now, in an effort to stampede the Walpole government into war, Jenkins was brought into the House of Commons to tell his story of Spanish atrocity, and to exhibit his ear. The War of Jenkin's Ear was the result (1739 - 1741), and in 1741 the English commercial war with Spain escalated into Phase Three of the global war being fought between England and France. The War of Austrian Succession would determine what happened to the Hapsburg Empire when Emperor Charles VI died. The Emperor had named his daughter Maria Theresa to succeed him as ruler. The protestant alliance supported Maria Theresa, while France and Spain were opposed.

The North American phase of The War of Austrian Succession was called King George's War (1741 - 1748) in British North America. In 1744 France and Spain declared war against England and her possessions, and once again France and her Native American allies was a threat to the British North American colonies and their Native American allies. For twenty years (1744 - 1763) British North Americans were kept on their toes; once again Britain asked her colonies to raise and equip troops, promising to repay bills submitted.

April 2, 1742 New Hampshire employed Thomas Johnston of Boston to make three copper engraver's plates, while asking the British government for permission to print paper money worth 25,000 English Pounds. ² Until now New Hampshire had been a part of Massachusetts; now she was a separate government, with a new governor, Benning Wentworth, who needed to be paid. New Hampshire also needed to build new roads, repair a fort on the frontier, build a new prison, a new statehouse, and a new lighthouse on the coast. ³

April 3, 1742 Britain gave New Hampshire permission to use Thomas Johnston's engraver's plates to print 25,000 English Pounds' worth of paper money. ⁴ A year later, September 28, 1743 New Hampshire received permission to print more paper money. ⁵ "1743" was added

to Thomas Johnston's engraver's plates, so that the earlier issue of paper money could be distinguished from the later.⁶ And in 1745 another issue of paper money made from the same engraver's plates, with "1745" added to the engraver's plates.⁶ This time the funds were to be used to raise and equip troops for an expedition against Louisburg, the great French fortress designed by the Royal Military Architect Vauban for a garrison of ten thousand soldiers.⁷

The great French fortress was widely thought to be impregnable. But it had a garrison of three thousand five hundred soldiers, not ten thousand, and these soldiers were dispirited because they knew they would never return to France except in death. Louisburg fell to the British North American expeditionary force.

The shock waves from the French defeat and the British North American victory were felt around the world. Although Britain gave Louisburg back to the French not once but twice, thereby outraging the British North Americans and convincing them that Parliament did not have their best interests at heart, the 1745 capture of Louisburg helped precipitate the end of the French in North America. When the British returned Louisburg to the French the first time, as part of the settlement of the 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and then again a few years later as part of another global treaty, British North Americans understood that they were pieces on a chessboard, not British Empire men and women with British rights.

So the Thomas Johnston engraver's plates were of vital interest to New Hampshire. They had to be purchased at the October 7, 1994 auction. New Hampshire had no funds for such a purchase; but if she could not find the funds she would never again have an opportunity to make so important a purchase of New Hampshire history. It had been more than two hundred fifty years since the engraver's artistry had been seen; they might

never be seen at auction again.

New Hampshire contacted potential private underwriters, one of which was The New Hampshire Bankers Association. The Bankers Association, then headed by Chris Flynn, rallied thirty-nine member banks to pledge \$11,500 toward the purchase of the Thomas Johnston engraver's plates, and with the aid of other donors the sale price of \$24,500 was met. Once again London was the setting for New Hampshire's hopes and dreams; today the engraver's plates are on view at The State House Visitor Center, in Concord. The next time you are visiting the state's capitol city, we invite you to see the work Thomas Johnston designed and executed so long ago.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Sinclair Hitchings, "Thomas Johnston"; in Boston Prints and Printmakers, 1670 - 1775 (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1973).
- 2 Nathaniel Bouton, D.D., ed., Provincial Papers: Documents and Records Relating to the Province of New Hampshire from 1738 to 1749 (Nashua, N.H., 1871), vol. 5 pp. 158 - 159. [Johnston was paid September 10, 1743. See Charter Records, vol. 1.]
- 3 Albert Stillman Batchellor, ed., Laws of New Hampshire...Vol. 2 1702 - 1745 (Concord, N.H., 1913), pp. 695ff. 15 George II.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Batchellor, op cit., pp. 725ff. 17 George II.
- 6 Bouton, op cit., February 13, 1744 (pp. 292ff.); October 4, 1745 (pp. 383ff. Also Batchellor, op cit., pp. 750ff. 18 George II.

Committee

TO THE HONORABLE THE GENERAL COURT OR ASSEMBLY OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE

IN SENATE

APRIL 17 1742

Resolved That the sum of Seven Shillings and Six Pence due to the Possessor thereof from the Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE shall be equal to One Ounce Two Penny w Twelve Grains of coined Silver Troy Weight of Sterling Alloy or Gold Coin at y Rate of Four Pounds Eighteen Shillings p Ounce, and shall be so accepted in all Payments and in y TREASURY of y Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE

NEW-HAMPSHIRE

SEVEN SHILLINGS

7-6 Shd. Six Pence 7-6

This Bill of Seven Shillings & Six Pence due to the Possessor thereof from y Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE shall be equal to One Ounce Two Penny w Twelve Grains of coined Silver Troy Weight of Sterling Alloy or Gold Coin at y Rate of Four Pounds Eighteen Shillings p Ounce, and shall be so accepted in all Payments and in y TREASURY of y Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE

APRIL 17 1742 By Order of y GENERAL COURT OR ASSEMBLY

Committee

Committee

TO THE HONORABLE THE GENERAL COURT OR ASSEMBLY OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE

IN SENATE

APRIL 17 1742

Resolved That the sum of Twenty Shillings due to the Possessor thereof from the Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE shall be equal to Three Ounces of coined Silver Troy Weight of Sterling Alloy or Gold Coin at the rate of Four Pounds Eighteen Shillings p Ounce, and shall be so accepted in all Payments and in the Treasury of y Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE

NEW-HAMPSHIRE

Twenty Shillings

This Bill of Twenty Shillings due to the Possessor thereof from the Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE shall be equal to Three Ounces of coined Silver Troy Weight of Sterling Alloy or Gold Coin at the rate of Four Pounds Eighteen Shillings p Ounce, and shall be so accepted in all Payments and in the Treasury of y Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE

APRIL 17 1742 By Order of y GENERAL COURT OR ASSEMBLY

Committee

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Thank you for your prompt cooperation
in sending us your data on the ~~1744~~
~~1744~~ copper plate for the 1744 bill issue.

~~It now~~ As you know ^{several} ~~the~~ copper plates for the
other issues per ^{reprinted} about 1870
(some say 1858) and we have ~~never~~ not been
able to locate them. There include the
1775 ^{issue} ~~plate made by~~ engraver by Paul Revere.